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Sermon for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 10, 23—37.

Our blessed Savior, who had come into this world of sin and iniquity, was ever desirous to help the poor and needy, to heal the sick and ailing, and to have His adorable Gospel preached to the penitent and broken-hearted. It was that loving heart of His which moved Him on one occasion to send forth seventy of His disciples, two by two, before His face, into every city and place whither He Himself would come; for, said He, “the harvest, truly, is great, but the laborers are few.” He gave these disciples command and power to heal the sick and to preach the kingdom of God. After a lapse of time they returned to Him with joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils,” over which Jesus had given them express power, “are subject unto us through Thy name.” After receiving these good tidings, Jesus rejoiced in spirit and gave expression to His joy by thanking His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, that He had hid these things, the spiritual things of the new dispensation, from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes, as if to say: Those who are wise in their own conceits, who feed upon their own knowledge as spiritual food, cannot look into the rich mines of heavenly grace and love which Thou hast opened to babes, to men of humble parts and capacities, whose extraction and education had nothing promising in it, who were but children in understanding till God by His Spirit elevated their faculties and furnished them with heavenly knowledge.

After this short address to His Father, Jesus turned to His disciples and said: “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.” Now, what did they see? Three things: They saw the innumerable miracles of Christ as they were wrought upon the bodily and spiritually afflicted; they saw the effects of Jesus’ power transferred to themselves in healing the sick and casting out devils; and they saw with mortal eye the Only-begotten of the Father, their

beloved Savior. We do not marvel when we find Jesus following up this saying with the words: "I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." The disciples are far above those who went before them, even above the greatest saints and favorites of the Old Testament. The honor and happiness of the New Testament saints greatly exceed those of the Old Testament, even of the prophets and kings, although these were also highly favored. These wished to see the substance of those things of which they had shadows and intimations. They looked out upon the grace and glory of the Messiah's kingdom as at a distant star with its rays penetrating the darkness that surrounded them, they beheld their Savior as reflected in a *speculum*, or mirror, while those of the New Testament saw Him as He was on earth. The believers in the Old Testament are comparable to men that rise at dawn; they see rays of light flashing across the eastern horizon, but see not the sun himself from which the rays emanate. The children of God in the New Testament see the Sun of Righteousness in His zenith scattering His rays of heavenly light all over the arched vault of heaven.

We, too, are living in the time of the New Covenant; to us also Christ's words are applicable: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see;" for we have the substance of all the shadows and types of the Old Testament. We need not inquire and search diligently after the grace that should come unto us as the prophets and writers of the Old Covenant did, for we are in possession of all, it is brought nigh unto us, even into our mouths and into our hearts. Though it is so near to us, yet few see it, few comprehend it, and still less receive it.—To bring this grand salvation nearer to your minds, to place it closer to your hearts, and to impress it indelibly upon your souls, I shall endeavor, by God's grace, to show you to-day the scarlet thread that runs through Scriptures by speaking to you of

TWO MOUNTAINS, SINAI AND CALVARY.

I direct your attention,

1. *To Mount Sinai, which is the Law, and*
2. *To Mount Calvary, which is the Gospel.*

1.

Our Gospel-lesson for to-day gives us a very clear insight into the heart of Holy Writ, teaching us by a parable of our Savior the awfulness of the Law and its exactions, and the sweetness of the Gospel and its free grace.

"And, behold, a certain lawyer," or scribe, "stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Al-

though this question was put with an evil intention,—for it was to tempt Jesus,—still, apart from the lawyer's object, it should be asked daily by every mortal on the face of the earth, What shall I do to inherit eternal life?—Jesus said to this scribe, answering by putting a counter-question, “What is written in the Law? How readest thou?” And he, answering, said, “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” And Christ said unto him, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”—We have here an elegant, exact, and very clear definition of the Law, a definition that Christ Himself has given Matt. 22, 37, where he adds: “On this hang all the Law and the prophets.” This definition is therefore well worth examining, well worthy of a study, and, above all, well worthy of taking to heart.—The Law consists of Ten Commandments given to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai and written on tables of stone, although it existed before that time and man was under it since the fall of our progenitors in Paradise, as, for example, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A large class of people, also many of the present generation, look upon this Law as having reference only to the outward life of man, *i. e.*, to his actions, to the things that he does. They say, a man keeps God's Law by not transgressing it with such deeds as murder, theft, adultery, drunkenness, and the like. But to teach this is irrational, is unbiblical, wrong, and sinful; it is a perversion of Scriptures and a bold, audacious thrust at our text. For here it is stated in very plain words that the Law is spiritual; it binds our hearts, our souls, our minds, and makes these responsible before God. It condemns not only our sinful deeds, but also the minutest and faintest thoughts that arise in the crannies of our dark hearts. The pettiest desire, the smallest lust, the littlest covetousness are transgressions of God's eternal Law, and deliver man over to death if they are not forgiven him; for the Law is spiritual. Its demands are such that we can never fulfill, it requires love towards God, a love that must be sincere and fervent, without guile, without disguise; it must be a true and honest, an undissembling and unfeigned love. There should not be the least little distraction or withdrawing from Him. We must look upon Him as the best of beings, in Himself most amiable and infinitely perfect and excellent, as one to whom we lie under the greatest obligations, both in gratitude and in interest. We must prize Him above all things and wholly devote ourselves to Him. The love to Him must be perfect in every respect, complete, devout; we must be entirely absorbed in it; all our intentions, all our thoughts, all our designs, all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and all our mind must be concentrated on God and on Him alone. This love must be warm, intense, and stable. As warmth

cannot be separated from the sun's rays, so must warmth of affection be intimately connected with the love towards God. It must be an ever brightly burning flame that knows no change, but has always the same intensity, the same degree, the same extent. No analogy can be found for it on earth. Connubial love changes, for man and wife are mortal; but our love towards God, the love that His Law demands of us, must be stable, firm, unchangeable, and unwavering. As soon as the least fluctuation, the least wavering or moving away from this one object, God, takes place, it is sin, in whose wake follows eternal death. Love towards God excludes, therefore, all placing of confidence and hope on perishable, earthly things, such as our earthly possessions, for he who loves these loves not God as he ought; the smallest inclination towards them is sin. This love excludes also self-love and self-esteem. O how prone we are to this sin! Alas, how many love themselves, make idols of their own dear selves! There is a young lady standing before her mirror gazing upon her beautiful features with extreme delight and contentedness; her beauty is her god, her face is the object of her adoration, her graces are the seat and secret of her love! Here is a young man admiring the pliancy and suppleness, the manliness and strength of his own self; he speaks of them, he praises them, he lauds them, he prays to them, he bows in reverence to them—they are his god, the very soul and heart of his love. O the haughtiness, the pride, the self-esteem of mortal man! We are all given to this in some form or other. But is this loving our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, with all our mind? Is it not quite the reverse? Instead of God, we love ourselves. Is this not the basest selfishness conceivable? Where God should throne a sceptered king, there we place ourselves and put the crown upon our haughty heads!

The second part of the Law demands: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Man, every man, loves himself. Paul, for example, says: "No man ever hated his own body," much less his soul. This love is innate. The desire for eating and drinking, protecting the body against the vicissitudes of weather and the like, are manifestations of this love, which is so very often made the source of the most horrid and shameful sins. Man does not without compulsion deprive himself of anything lawful; he always cares for himself first of all; he is nearest to himself in all things. The starving man always feeds himself first, the man in a fire tries to make his own escape before he endeavors to save another person.—Now, the Law of God demands of every one that he should love his neighbor as he loves himself; the love towards his neighbor must be on the same line with that towards himself. God says: You should not give preference to yourself, never seek merely your own, but always your neighbor's good. And the degree of love must be

ever the same towards every person; for "neighbor" in the Bible means all that dwell with you on the globe at the same time. It does not denote merely the folks living next door to you, but just as well those a hundred miles away, should you have an opportunity to show neighborly love to them. Our text teaches this. The Samaritan did the duties of a neighbor to a man whom he had never seen before. Nor are only our friends your neighbors, but also your greatest enemies; you are commanded to love them as yourself. This do, my friend, and thou shalt live! Love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

This do, and thou shalt live. Have you done this in all things? Have you never transgressed these two commandments? If so, you are righteous, and deserve eternal life; but if not, if you have come short in one little particular of this Law, you are a sinner, worthy of eternal death and damnation. I need not say "one little particular," for, alas, there is not one among us who has kept one of the Ten Commandments of God; we must all confess that our thoughts have not been in accordance with the Law, that many of our words were flagrant sins, and some of our deeds call forth God's just wrath against them. We are as the man in the parable who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among the thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. The Law has stripped us of all our own righteousness in which we confided; it has wounded and bruised our consciences, and now departs, leaving us half dead,—no, not half, but wholly dead; for "you were dead in trespasses and sins," says the Word of Truth. What must we do to be saved? We cannot save ourselves, for we are sinners, and the righteous God is a quick judge against all sinners. Whence shall we receive help? O that these thoughts be now prying at your souls! Then you will gladly follow to Mount Calvary, and there receive the salvation you seek.

2.

In our text, Jesus meets the lawyer, who wanted to justify himself by asking who his neighbor was, with a parable of a man that has been beset by highwaymen, who treat him as robbers and thieves only can; he is left half dead on the spot. It happened that a certain priest came that way; seeing him, he passed by; likewise a Levite. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where this helpless man was; seeing him, he has compassion, he pities the man, has mercy upon him, goes to him, binds up his wounds, pours oil and wine in them, sets him on his own beast, and brings him to an inn, where he cares for him. Departing on the morrow, he pays the host two pence and instructs him to take care of him, promising to defray the expenses when he comes again.

This, my friends, is a just and an adequate description of Jesus and His Gospel. The law of Moses strips man of his own raiment, of everything by which he could expect to obtain heaven; it wounds him by casting firebrands into his conscience, burning and searing the very heartstrings of his soul. In this condition it leaves him, twice dead in sins, utterly unable to help himself, being without strength.. As the priest and the Levite, the ministers and expounders of the Law, it looks upon us in our misery, but gives us no relief, having neither pity nor power to help us. But yonder comes the good Samaritan, Jesus Christ. He sees us, sees our helpless condition, and has compassion on us. Ah, blessed words! He has compassion, for who could help us but He alone! If He would not have compassion, where could we find balsam to heal those direful wounds, those goads of conscience, and to restore us to life again? He has compassion and binds up our bleeding wounds, pours in, not oil and wine, but that which is infinitely more precious, His own blood. He does not put us upon a beast to bring us to an inn, but He takes us in His arms, presses us to His bosom, and brings us into the home of many mansions. He takes care of us and bids us put all the expenses of our cure on His account.

Jesus is a good Samaritan to every sinner. He always has been and always will be in the Gospel. The contents of the Gospel are expressed by Isaiah thus: "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a pardoning message to him that feels the wrath of God. To illustrate: Supposing a man in this city who had killed a person is found guilty of murder in the first degree, is condemned to death by the jury, and is to be hanged this 15th day of September at twelve o'clock. He is given the special permission to travel to the governor of this state to beg for pardon, stating that he is innocent, that he never perpetrated the crime accused of, that it is not possible that he could be such a man, that there is a flaw in the argument, and the like; but all is in vain, the governor only states: You are guilty, and you shall suffer the penalty of the law. He returns a broken man. His friends go to the capital to plead for him with manifold reasons. All in vain. The 15th of September is nearing, no respite is granted, hopes are gone. The governor refuses to hear any more excuses. Finally, on this Sunday morning, the condemned man concludes to send a message to the governor; he does it at eleven o'clock. With the speed of electricity the telegram hurries to the capital, the governor opens it and reads, "I am guilty." The same minute a message arrives at St. Louis from the governor addressed to the man standing on the

gallows with the noose around his neck, reading, "You are pardoned." That is Gospel-grace to him who confesses his sins, acknowledges his guilt, feels the need of it to save his life. It is offered freely. Isaiah says: "Come, and buy without money and without price!" It cannot be bought or bribed with excuses and with pleadings of innocence, for we are guilty; therefore we repently bend our knees and send the message to heaven, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" And back comes the joyous tidings, Thou art pardoned for Christ's sake!

There remains but the answer to one question of him who seeks salvation in Christ, and that is, How can I *know* that I am pardoned, that my sins are forgiven me? The Bible tells you so on every page. There are two things recorded in this book: the one is sin, the knowledge of which we obtain by the Law, and the other is forgiveness, offered us in the Gospel. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." What can be plainer than this: If you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, you have everlasting life. Or, "Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." If there is anything plainly revealed in the Bible, it is this truth, that man can be sure that he is pardoned, that his sins are forgiven him by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith.—And being sure of this, he receives and possesses the fruits of justification, as righteousness, peace with God, and the ever efficacious blood of Him who laid down His precious life for their soul, which cleanses them daily from all sin. If there is a happy man on earth, it is the Christian. What, then, is more desirous and worth striving after than to be a child of God?

I shall show you two views drawn from the pages of this Book of books. We are standing before a large mirror, and, looking in it, we see a man rolling and wallowing in the dirty mire of low lust, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, lost to virtue, the slave of vice, sunken below the dumb brute. We look again and behold a man praying to his wealth, to his money, adoring his own dear self, mocking the First Commandment, an idolater, a child of Satan. Over there is a man carried away by his natural desire for drink; drunkenness is stamped on his gait, stamped on his family, stamped on his countenance, stamped on his soul. Again we look and see men given to hatred, given to variance; they will not look at each other for hatred's sake. We see men given to wrath, to strife, to seditions, to heresies, to envyings, to murder. There stands a man that says, I have done none of these, and looking into his heart, we see him adoring a strange god. We behold blasphemies arising in his

soul, disobedience towards parents, secretly lusting after that which is his neighbor's, planning and scheming how he may obtain it, coveting and desiring after unlawful things, in short, a vast swamp and mire of sins, conscious sins and unconscious sins, sins of weakness, sins of malice, prevailing sins and crying sins, sins in thought, sins in word, sins in deed, a large waste of sins. And above all this is written by the finger of a just God: "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Seeing this, we tremble, for we know that our hearts are given to some of these things. I see here a picture of my heart, a picture of your heart, a picture of every man's heart; for "all have sinned" and all must cry, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"—Here is the other view. Standing on the rock-bound coast of a vast ocean, I see, as far as sight goes, nothing but water, water. In the midst of this vast waste of water stands a solid rock. Billow after billow, wave after wave rolls against it and is dashed to pieces. May the weather be ever so tempestuous, this rock defies it. Firm it stands, resisting the force of surge, the flash of lightning, the madness of hurricane; time cannot harm it, and age it knows not. In these waters I see millions and millions of mortals swimming, fighting the waves and facing the tempest; but every minute one is swallowed up; he cannot resist any longer, and therefore must succumb. Instead of seeking refuge on this rock, they prefer ruining themselves. A small number are upon the cliff of refuge, the rest float in the sea of their destruction. On this rock stands a cross, on which is written in letters of gold: Pardon, mercy, free grace, for this cross's sake, and, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." There, another person reaches the rock. Hear him saying:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Now, my friend, there are two facts that cannot be denied: First, you are a sinner, guilty before God for transgressing His Law. Is this your confession, do you believe it, are you convinced of it, does your conscience tell you so? Do you regret it and therefore cry for mercy? O happy man if you do! Here is mercy, grace, and life; that is the rock of your salvation, and yonder the door of heaven opens for you. Will you enter, or tarry here below and sin a little longer,—for it may be too early yet to go to Christ? Delay is always dangerous, even in temporal things, much more so in spiritual matters. Consequently, let us improve the present opportunity to the salvation of our souls! Let us embrace the gifts offered us in the Gospel gladly, firmly, and steadfastly, knowing and feeling the need of them! Having done this, let us also be persuaded that neither

death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And:

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment-throne:
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!

Amen.

F. W. ADAMS; *contrib. by O. K.*

Sermon on the Epistle for Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

EPH. 4, 1-7.

"I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," these are the opening words of our text. Paul here reminds us of the vocation wherewith we are called, and bases an exhortation upon the fact that we have been called. He is speaking of that vocation, or call, received by every Christian, and of which St. Peter says that by it we have been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of God, 1 Ep. 2, 9. Darkness, that is man's natural state of sinfulness and utter ignorance of divine things. His mind is darkened so that he neither knows, loves, nor fears God. He has entirely erroneous notions of God and of things spiritual. He knows nothing of Christ and salvation. He is "without Christ, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. 2, 12. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He hath loved us," Eph. 2, 4, "hath saved us and called us with an holy calling," 2 Tim. 1, 9. He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He has called us out of sin and ignorance unto the knowledge of Himself and of our Savior Jesus Christ. He has called us into the communion of saints, the holy Christian Church, so that we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, Eph. 2, 19. That is our present state as Christians, and that is the vocation of which Paul is here speaking. It is the effectual call of God which has reached us through the Gospel, and by which He has "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son," Col. 1, 13.

Of this our vocation, or calling, Paul reminds us in our text, and bases an admonition on it, *viz.*, that we should walk worthy of

the vocation wherewith we have been called. Because God has called you out of darkness, has made you His own dear children and members of His holy family, therefore see to it now that you walk worthy of this your calling. Let us lay to heart this exhortation, and learn what it requires of us.

“WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE
CALLED!”

This means,

1. *Walk so as not to dishonor Him who has called you.*
2. *Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

1.

“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” that means, in the first place, *Walk so as not to dishonor God who has called you.* For by His holy call God has separated us from the unbelieving, wicked world and has made us His chosen generation, His sons and daughters. Therefore, if we at all realize the high honor thereby conferred upon us, we must walk so as not to dishonor Him, not to bring shame and disgrace upon His name. Miserable wretch of a son who by a disgraceful life heaps shame upon the fair name of his father!—By the call of God we have been made soldiers in the army of Christ. We have sworn allegiance to His banners. That imposes the obligation that we at all times, under all circumstances, and under all conditions deport ourselves as soldiers of the cross. The first duty of every soldier is loyalty to his flag. He must not disgrace it by unbecoming conduct. So also our first duty towards Christ, the Captain of our salvation, is unflinching loyalty. We must show it by our lives that we are His. We must beware lest by our lives we dishonor Him. “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” therefore means: Walk so as not to dishonor your God and Savior; live so that you do not heap shame and disgrace upon His holy name.

Our walk, our lives as Christians in this world, must therefore be entirely different from what it was before our vocation and conversion, entirely different from the life of the children of this world. “In time past ye walked according to the course of this world,” says the apostle, “according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience . . . in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,” Eph. 2, 2. 3. Before his conversion, man is a child and slave of Satan, and the lusts of his father will he do, John 8, 44. He lives according to the desires of his own depraved heart, fulfilling the works of the flesh. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication,” etc., Gal. 5, 19 ff. That is a picture, true to life, of the conversation of the unbeliever.

Now our walk as Christians must be the very opposite of this. We are no longer of this world, but separate from it. God has called us out of the world, and we must walk worthy of this calling, worthy of Him who has called us. "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy," 1 Pet. 1, 15. 16. Our entire life in word and deed must bear the stamp of holiness. We boast that we are God's children; consequently we must live as God's children, lest that terrible indictment of the apostle be justly applied to us: "Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking of the Law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you," Rom. 2, 23 f. Applied to New Testament conditions, this means: You boast that you are a Christian, that God has called you out of this wicked world and made you His child. Very well, but beware lest your life give the lie to your words, and lest you cause the world to blaspheme God whom you claim to be your Father. If an unbeliever lives in sin and shame, if he curses, lies, deceives, is given to envy, hate, and vindictiveness, and lives only to enjoy the pleasures of this life, no one is particularly offended at that. You can expect nothing better of an unbeliever; it is but natural that he should live thus. For "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit," neither "do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles," Matt. 7, 18. 16. But with us Christians it is different. The whole world, not least of all the unbelievers themselves, expect us to lead a better life. If a person calling himself a Christian is found to curse and swear, to take the name of God in vain, to despise parents and masters, to be spiteful, malicious, or filthy in word or deed, to be given to sharp practices in business, to lying, slandering, and defaming, to be covetous, and, in general, to run with the world so that, judging by his life, you cannot tell the difference between him and an unbeliever,—I say, if one that calls himself a Christian lives thus, he causes the world to blaspheme. Unbelievers will say, He claims to be a Christian, a child of God? Why, he is no better than we are; he lives like we do. There cannot be much to Christianity if that is the kind of life it produces. Thus, by an unholy life, Christians bring shame and dishonor upon God who has called them. And therefore the first thing required of us if we would heed the exhortation of our text: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" is this, that we be holy in all manner of conversation and live so as not to dishonor God who has called us.

2.

"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," that means, secondly, "*Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" The apostle continues: "Walk worthy . . . with all

lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering . . . endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace [being] one body and one Spirit, even as ye are," etc., vv. 2—4. We walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called if, with all lowliness and meekness, etc., we endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To walk in accordance with the vocation wherewith we have been called, therefore means that we strive after those things which tend to strengthen and preserve the unity of the Spirit, and avoid all those things whereby this unity might be disturbed or utterly destroyed.

For there is unity of the Spirit among those whom God has called from darkness into His marvelous light. This is a unity of the Spirit, a unity which the Holy Spirit has wrought. By calling men through the Gospel and kindling faith in Jesus Christ within their hearts, the Holy Spirit unites them with Jesus Christ and thereby also with each other. They are bound together by the bond of a common faith, and are at peace with God and each other. The apostle describes this state of unity thus: "One body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling," v. 4. All Christians taken together form but one spiritual body whose only Head is Christ. They are united with each other as closely as the members of one body. One Spirit, namely, the Holy Spirit, actuates them all. One and the same hope fills the heart of them all, to wit, the hope of eternal salvation which was planted in them when they were called. They all have but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," v. 5. They all acknowledge only Jesus Christ who has bought them with His holy, precious blood to be their Lord and Master whom they put on when they were baptized by the one baptism common to all Christendom, and with whom they are united by the bonds of one and the same Christian faith. They all have but "one God and Father who is above all, and through all, and in [them] all," v. 6. They all believe in the one true God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For the sake of Christ, He is their Father, who is above them all, guarding, protecting, and leading them in the paths of righteousness, so that all things must work together for their good, Rom. 8, 28. This one God and Father operates through them all, and dwells in them all as in His temple and abode. Behold, that is the present state of us Christians whereto we have been called by God. It is a state of unity closer, more intimate, and more enduring than that between father and child, between husband and wife.

And now "walk worthy of [this] vocation wherewith ye are called;" "endeavor to *keep* the unity of the Spirit!" If ye would walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye have been called, then do all in your power to *keep and preserve* this unity; avoid everything that might disturb it. Therefore walk "with all lowliness and

meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," v. 3. Walk "*with all lowliness and meekness.*" Lowliness and meekness are the opposites of pride, haughtiness, and arrogance. Pride, haughtiness, and arrogance are the death of peace, harmony, and the unity of the Spirit, for "by pride cometh contention," Prov. 13, 10. It really ought to be unnecessary to warn Christians against pride and to exhort them to lowliness and meekness. For of what could a Christian be proud? What grounds could you have to think so highly of yourself and so little, even disparagingly, of others? You are a sinner like the rest of us; you must be saved by *grace*, just like all other sinners. You are no better than your fellow-Christians. Or have you a few dollars more than they, or more honor in this world than they? Or are you endowed with a keener intellect? That is no reason to exalt yourself in a spirit of pride, for all these things are but *gifts* of God, 1 Cor. 4, 7. You ought not be proud and exalt yourself on account of such special gifts of God, but you should be all the more careful. For special gifts entail special obligations and responsibilities. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," Luke 12, 48. Do not, therefore, disturb the unity of the Spirit by pride and haughtiness, but help to preserve Christian unity by showing a spirit of lowliness and humility, of meekness and mildness. Be like your meek and gentle Master who has called you into the blessed state of unity of faith and of the Spirit.

Yes, endeavor to *keep* the unity of the Spirit, and therefore "*with long-suffering forbear one another in love.*" If the unity of the Spirit, if peace and harmony among us are to be preserved, we must be long-suffering, must be patient with each other, and bear with the faults and shortcomings, the peculiarities, whims, and humors of our brethren. You say your brother is peculiar and queer? Perhaps he is; but others may think the same of *you*. We all have our shortcomings and peculiarities. Your brother has offended you? Perhaps he has; but may it not have been done unintentionally, perhaps even unconsciously? And have *you* never offended *him*? Oh! we all are still very far from being perfect; we daily sin much, also against our brethren. Therefore patience, and much of it, is needed, a long-suffering, charitable, forgiving disposition. Without it, it is utterly impossible to preserve that priceless treasure, the unity of the Spirit, and peace and harmony. Therefore practice patience, forbear one another in love, and "forgive one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye," Col. 3, 13. That is the kind of walk, or conversation, that is in accordance with your vocation wherewith you have been called; that the kind of life that becomes you as a child of God and disciple of the loving Master.

Oh, then, let us strive after these things! Never forget who and what you are! Never forget the dignity and the responsibility of your exalted station in this world! You are God's children. But, you say, I still also am flesh, and "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," Gal. 5, 17. That is true, but you are not *only* flesh, you are also Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth also against the flesh, *ibid.* And by the Spirit you can and should say with Paul: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. 4, 13. If you feel your own insufficiency, turn to Christ, the unfailing Fountain of Strength. You can find Him in His Word. Use that diligently! Go to Him in daily prayer! Ask of Him the gift of His Spirit to overcome the flesh. He will strengthen you so that day by day you will live more and more worthy of the vocation wherewith you have been called. For "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength," Is. 40, 29. Amen.

THEO. BUNDENTHAL.

Funeral Oration.

ACTS 16, 31.

DEARLY BELOVED IN CHRIST:—

It is a sad occasion that brings us together. We are met to give the last loving farewell to a man who was well and favorably known to a large circle of friends and neighbors, who was a good and kind husband, and a loving and careful father to those that are now left orphans. He has departed this life; no more shall we see him nor hear his voice; there is no more work for him to provide food and shelter for his beloved,—he has gone to meet his Maker. All that is left of him, his dead body, will soon be covered from our sight; soon earth will be returned to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and everything will be over.

Will it though? By no means. What of the soul? Man has a soul, and it is an immortal soul, a spirit that never dies, a being, that, though it be for a time separated from its body, will ever be living, and which will, immediately on being freed from its body, enter a state in which it will remain to all eternity. Only for once, then, will it experience a change of existence, a change that comes on the great Judgment Day, when all the dead bodies shall hear His voice and arise and be united again to their souls, and body and soul will thence forevermore either enjoy the bliss and glory of life in heaven, or suffer together forevermore the terrible pains of hell in the fiery gulf of damnation.

And such fate will be meted out to man according to whether he died a child of God, believing in Christ Jesus, our only Savior, or whether he died a child of Satan, without faith in Christ. For thus

it is written in the unfailing Word of God: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Now all the friends of the deceased assure me that, to their minds, he has been living and dying a faithful servant of Christ, trusting to Him alone for grace and forgiveness of his sins; and I am persuaded that these friends are right in their assurance. If it were otherwise, it would not be my place to stand here, and stamp this funeral an affair of our Lutheran Church. We Lutheran ministers must not be expected to officiate, even if called, at whatsoever burial comes along. But when a person dies a Christian, believing in Christ, then we willingly come when called, and help to lay his body to rest with the rites of our church, and speak a comforting and cheering word to the mourners, and to all that will attend.

Thus, if it be true that your father and friend has in good faith given up his ghost into the hands of his Savior and Maker, you may be of good cheer. It is then certainly well with him. He has been delivered from all evil, from all sins, and is out of all danger. He has come to rest from all work and worry, and is now happy in the sight of the Lamb of God.

And though a heavy cloud now hangs over your house and family darkening the ways of life before you, hindering you from seeing the merciful goodness of our heavenly Father, be sure that shortly it will pass away, and be sure that the time will come when you will give thanks and praises to God that He has just now and just so pressed you with this sore trial.

But furthermore I call upon you and all my hearers to bear in mind what an occasion this is. It is a burial. It is the consequence of death. Who can say who is next to call us to such a meeting? Whose life shall next come to an end? But no matter who is next, certain it is that we all at some time shall go the way of all flesh. And shall we not be happy to meet the loved ones in heaven? Yea, shall we not be unspeakably happy if we can enter heaven at all, if we shall for all eternity inherit and enjoy the kingdom that our beloved Jesus has prepared for us?

But are we sure that we shall enter heaven? Have you ever pondered over that question? You know Christ said, as is written Matt. 7, 21: "Not every one that sayeth unto me, 'Lord, Lord!' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

It is certainly a question of great importance, What must I do to be saved? That is the selfsame question which the trembling keeper of the prison at Philippi asked of the Apostle Paul. And Paul answered it; and his answer is good to the end of the days, and will ever be a godsend to every one that is troubled about the eternal welfare of his soul. His answer is this: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

And these words I should like to impress upon the heart of every one among us, every one that wishes to keep away from punishment and pain of hell, every one that wishes to meet the beloved ones in heaven, every one that wishes to be eternally blessed and behold the light and glory of God.

If you would be saved, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only way!—That does not mean that a man may work sin and all kinds of unrighteousness, that he may be cruel and unclean and willful. A man cannot be a willful sinner and at the same time a believing Christian. Nor does believing in Christ mean, Work out your own salvation by being good and doing good. A Christian must be God-fearing and do good works in dutiful exercise of his daily business and in honesty and charity, not to earn heaven thereby, but simply because he wants to be thankful and obedient to God. We shall be saved only by faith in Christ, without any of our merits or works.

What is it to believe in Christ? In order to believe in Christ, it is necessary, in the first place, to learn and to know something of Christ, and that not according to our imagination, but according to the Gospel. We must learn how Christ, true God and man, lived and suffered and died for us. He was our substitute, taking our sins and their punishment upon Him and giving us, in return, His righteousness, that we may stand justified before the judgment of God.

To believe in Christ we must, secondly, give the Gospel of Christ our heartiest assent. We must not doubt and ask, How can that be? Let us accept as an immovable foundation of truth what Scriptures tell us of Christ, how He has worked out our salvation.

And above all, let us put our trust and confidence in Christ and remain true to Him in spite of all. Our own heart will ask us, How dare you, such a sinful creature, expect God to be gracious to you and forgive you all your sins? But we must simply rely on Jesus, and be sure that His blood cleanseth us from all sins.

If the world and the devil would trouble us with doubts about our salvation through Christ, let us manfully resist them in faith. Let Christ be the Rock of Ages upon which rests the anchor of our trust and hope, and the wildest storms of hell shall not move it. No, no earthly trouble or danger, neither death nor life, nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Such is the trust we must have in Christ. Whoever thus believes in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life. May God be gracious to us all, and grant us this faith through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Amen.

HUFF.